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STUDIES IN HUMANISM. By F. C. S. Schiller, M. A., D. Sc.
London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1907. Pp. xv, 492.

Those who dislike the accumulation of magazines on their shelves must feel relieved when the more valuable part of their contents becomes obtainable in a separate volume. Dr. Schiller has here collected from various quarters his more recent essays in defense or furtherance of the philosophy which in twenty years' time is to prevail wherever reason, or will, can penetrate or be made to penetrate. Some of them are controversial, directed against Absolutism and Intellectualism; some are constructive (or tentatively suggestive of possible constructions) and deal with Humanism in relation to Freedom and Religion; others literary, such as the paper on the "Dissociation of the Absolute," and two dialogues expounding the conjectural philosophy of Protagoras. They have a certain unity of subject, and abound in incisive dialectic, eloquent dissertation and the characteristic humor that is so very disconcerting to those who have none. Dr. Schiller is pleased with the vogue that the "new philosophy" has already obtained; and his list of adherents comprises the names of so many genial souls that one shrinks from the danger of saying anything unkind about it. Far from shunning criticism, however, Humanism may be said hitherto to have lived upon it; rejoinders, sur-rejoinders, and rebutters have spread its fame from the Rocky Mountains to the Apennines.

But is it a *new* philosophy? It seems to me to be essentially the Empirical Philosophy, with some additions that are accidental and by no means improvements. These additions are of two kinds; first, certain exaggerations and paradoxes connected with the doctrine of Voluntarism, and secondly, certain approximations to popular beliefs, depending upon a loose conception of the requirements of verification.

In the first essay Dr. Schiller distinguishes Humanism from Pragmatism. Pragmatism is the epistemological doctrine that we are only concerned with *human* knowledge, that truth is a valuation, and relative to some application and purpose. Humanism is the carrying of the spirit of this doctrine into all branches of philosophy: it "demands that man's integral nature shall be used as the whole premise which philosophy must argue from wholeheartedly, that man's complete satisfaction shall be the conclusion philosophy must aim at" (p. 13).

That actual knowing is purposive need not be disputed; the great body of knowledge, at least, is acquired by diligently seeking for it. But if knowing is purposive and therefore volitional, volition, in Dr. Schiller's view, has some kind of superiority to cognition; "theory is an outgrowth of practice and incapable of truly 'independent' existence" (p. 128). "Truth is a product of our volitional activity" (p. 357). "In theory, at least, the 'goods' and therefore the 'truths' of all the sciences are unified and validated by their relation to the Supreme Good" (p. 153). Now are not these exaggerated and one-sided statements? Whilst it is true that human knowing is for the most part volitional (voluntary, rather), it is no less true that volition is guided by knowing, and that that is even the differentia of volition in the stricter use of the word; whilst, again, if it may be said that true and false are a kind of good and bad (namely, for understanding), it may equally be said that "good" and "bad" involve judgments which are true or false. Why then should "practice" or "will" be given any primacy over truth or reason? That the ethical conception of Good has "supreme authority over the logical conception of true," has been the ground of all sincere persecution on the part of those who were confident of already knowing the good.

It is a foible of this philosophy that truth and fact are "made," whereas we have been accustomed to say that they are discovered. Dr. Schiller argues that "it is folly any longer to close one's eyes to the importance and all-pervasiveness of subjective activities in the making of truth. "The futile notion of a really 'independent' truth and fact, that cannot be known or related to us or each other, must be abandoned" (p. 182). He grants that, in the act of knowing, a basis of fact must be "accepted," but then "the acceptance must not be ignored, and is fatal to the chimera of a 'fact' for us existing quite independently of our 'will' " (p. 186). The Pragmatist thinks that the coerciveness of "fact," is "mitigated by his acceptance, by which it ceases to be *de facto* thrust upon him, and becomes *de jure* 'willed' " (p. 189). A sort of primary reality "may certainly, in a sense, be called independent of us," "not 'made' by us but 'found.' " But, "as immediately experienced, it is a meaningless chaos, merely the raw material of a cosmos, the stuff out of which real fact is made." Our cognitive procedures "make it into 'fact' in the stricter and more familiar sense (with which alone scientific discus-

sion is concerned) by processes of selection and valuation" (p. 187).

I have quoted so much upon a point uninteresting in itself, to bring out a characteristic trait of Voluntarism, the disposition to get the bit between its teeth and gallop, disregarding the bridle of reason. For consider: "Primary reality," antecedent to fact in the stricter sense, with which alone scientific discussion is concerned, comprises not only the perceptual plane of animal life (which is no chaos), but even the external world of all men who are not scientifically educated. Is that "a meaningless chaos"? So much then may, in a sense, be called independent of us, not made but found. But only in a sense; for certainly it is accepted, and acceptance, it seems, as volition! Does then anything pragmatic or human turn upon the question whether we discover truth or make it? Nothing that I can see. In the middle of works devoted to a philosophy whose claim it is to discard every question that does not make a difference, we find many pages of discussion upon a point that makes no difference.

If the reader, on getting further into this book, should feel uncomfortable at finding that it is a question whether, indeed, we do not "make" reality itself, let him cheer up. We do; but only as we are already well aware of doing it. Knowledge alters subjective reality in the knower, and the application of knowledge alters objective reality (p. 438). Who will quarrel with this? Except indeed the Absolutist, who thinks that reality (in a different sense) is complete. That knowledge is a means of culture and of power, and that social reform is worth attempting, these things are generally admitted; yet Dr. Schiller stirs them up into an entertaining paradox. And to what end? Does it make any difference? For example, is "The Making of Reality" a more inspiring legend for the banners of progress than "Greatest Happiness," "Duty," "Fraternity"? I think not; it needs too much explanation.

More serious issues are connected with the Pragmatist's doctrine of verification—if I understand what it is. When we read: "All truths must have shown themselves to be useful; they must have been applied to some problem of actual knowing, by usefulness in which they were tested and verified" (p. 8), we admit that the statement includes scientific experimentation, but it may include so much more as to be quite indefinite. Or take this: the mind, in knowing, "experiments upon the situation by some voluntary

interference, which may begin with a mere predication, and proceed by reasoned inferences, but always when completed issues in an *act*. It is guided by the results ('consequences') of this experiment, which go to verify or disprove its provisional basis, etc." (p. 185.) Here we have a string of familiar logical terms—"experiment," "inference," "verify"—but no logic, no indication of how the mind is to judge of the experiment. And turning to p. 362, we find that "the presuppositions of scientific knowledge and religious faith are the same. So, too, is the mode of verification by experience. The assumptions which work, *i. e.*, which approve themselves by ministering to human interests, purposes, and objects of desire, are 'verified,' and accepted as true." It is this prominence of the idea that usefulness, results, working, is the test of truth, without a definite appeal to any rational principle, that led me elsewhere to class Pragmatism with Skepticism; but Skepticism is clearly so remote from the intention of the Pragmatists that I shall be happy to withdraw the charge if they either explain that they trust entirely to scientific verification, or definitely formulate some other criterion. Should they select the former alternative, Pragmatism will not differ from Empiricism.

But apparently the new philosophy is expected to lead to results that could hardly be justified by the old Empiricism. For example, whilst the position that axioms are postulates might be supported by the opinions of Spencer and Bain, we could not find in them any sanction for the further position, that therefore they are perhaps untrue. Yet this frivolous illation has now become fashionable. It seems that the strong sympathy of some scientific men with popular religious beliefs induces them to minimize the "opposition between science and religion," and in that design to disparage the certainty of scientific evidence in order to find a footing for the supernatural. I share their sympathy, but am convinced that they have taken the wrong way to the end they have in view. The cumulative scientific evidence is overwhelming. It is only by forgetting this for the time that we can seem to ourselves to doubt it. Uniformity, continuity, causality, whether we call them axioms or postulates, admit of no exception; and the evidence for them is incomparably greater than for any other beliefs.

Yet Dr. Schiller thinks so lightly of them that, in a chapter on "Freedom," he not only supposes the possibility of Indeterminism in human conduct, but is willing to extend it throughout the

organic and inorganic worlds. Let us take a rapid survey of his arguments: (1) The scientific postulate of causality, he says, is opposed by the ethical postulate "that our actions shall be so conceived that the fulfilment of duty is possible in spite of all temptations, in order that man shall be responsible and an agent in the full sense of the term" (p. 394). But this begs the question; for no determinist admits such a postulate, or that it is implied in responsibility and agency. Indeterminism destroys both. (2) A free act is incalculable; but the metaphysical truth of freedom (indeterminism) does not affect the *methodological* use of the determinist principle; and, therefore, the scientific objection to a doctrine of freedom is strictly limited to its introduction of an unmanageable contingency into scientific calculations. "It would hold against an indeterminism which rendered events incalculable, but not against a belief in Freedom as such" (p. 399). That is to say, Freedom being a belief and causality *only* a postulate, there is no collision between them. But for some of us causality is a belief, and it absolutely excludes indeterminism. Such is my own case: repudiating the anæmic quibble that scientific postulates are not beliefs. (3) The good moral life may be conceived without indetermination. "It is only when we deal with the bad man that it becomes morally necessary to insist that an alternative to his bad life must be really possible." The moralist "wants to be able to say to the bad man: You need not have become the leper you are. Even now your case is not quite hopeless" (p. 400). But these two sayings are quite diverse: "You need not have become, etc.," is false; "Your case is not hopeless" is true, not because of indeterminism, but because real causes, such as good counsel, reflection or a change of circumstances and companions, may change his reactions. (4) The scientific and ethical postulates may be reconciled if we consider that free acts always seem to spring from the given situation; "if the alternatives always seem to exist for a particular mind under particular circumstances, does it not follow at once that whichever of the alternatives is chosen, it will appear to be rationally connected with the antecedent circumstances" (p. 404)? In the first place, I answer, No. It is not enough that in a case of choice "both alternatives should appeal to us" (p. 402); an action is not rationally connected with our former life, merely by realizing *some* impulse or desire; it must agree with our character. Now "agreement with our character," though it has a meaning in everyone's experience, cannot be known

completely by simple inspection, because our present character is never entirely known to us, and moreover it develops. Therefore, I say, secondly, that the interpretation of our actions depends upon the belief in causality; and, thirdly, that this belief cannot be reconciled, in the interpretation of choice, with the belief in indeterminism, because the two are contradictory. But whereas the belief in causality is not only found to be a necessary postulate of science and business, but is enforced by continual experience, the suppositious indeterminism is not needed to interpret morality, cannot interpret it, and rests upon no experience but the most superficial introspection. (5) "The determinist regards the scientific postulate as the expression of an ultimate truth about reality." But he knows that the whole course of events never will be calculated. "Why then should he repine at learning that the impossibility of his ideal rests ultimately on the inherent nature of reality rather than on the ineradicable weakness of his own mind? Practically it makes no difference" (p. 407). Such is Dr. Schiller's insight into the minds of other people. Why should we care if our beliefs are false, why trouble about mere theory? Yet he seems concerned that *his* beliefs should be true, although "practically it makes no difference." (6) At page 409 we find "plastic," and at page 411 "variable" used as equivalent to "indeterminate." At page 409 we read that, "Regarded objectively law means nothing but habit;" whereas habit is something that may be acquired and lost, exactly the opposite of the action described by a law. At page 416 we may "entertain the idea that the constancy of matter may be merely the stability of an average;" as if the stability of an average could have nothing to do with causation. (7) Dr. Schiller has minimized the influence of Indeterminism, so that it may not disturb scientific calculations, and "practically makes no difference;" yet he trusts to it as the great means of ameliorating the lot of mankind. At page 412 he shows how much this is under our control; but all the improvements there mentioned might be brought about by enlightened self-interest, were there no other motive; whereas Indeterminism can give no ground for hope of any kind. It is an entirely empty concept. The most that can be said is: "Here are certain phenomena which we cannot otherwise explain;" but Indeterminism can never explain them. In attempting to predict phenomena ascribed to Indeterminism, we cannot even appeal to that last resource of our ignorance, the hypothesis that

the chances are equal; for even that implies that the causes, though unknown, may be equally distributed. Dr. Schiller supposes that freedom, or the plastic indetermination of habit, may be common to all things in the universe, and that the more they have of it, "the more plastic to good purposes we may expect to find them" (p. 448). But Indeterminism has no more relation to purpose than to mechanics.

It seems that Pragmatism is opposed to Naturalism. In a sort of epitome of P. III of Spencer's "Psychology," Dr. Schiller says: "Biologically speaking, the whole mind, of which the intellect forms part, may be conceived as a typically human instrument for effecting adaptations, which has survived and developed by showing itself possessed of an efficacy superior to the devices adopted by other animals. Hence the most essential feature of Pragmatism may well seem its insistence on the fact that *all mental life is purposive*. This insistence embodies the pragmatic protest against naturalism, and as such ought to receive the cordial support of all rationalistic idealisms" (p. 10). Why, by the way, is there any incongruity between Idealism and Naturalism? I see none, unless idealists are so short-sighted as to force it on. But does it not need some force to derive a protest against Naturalism from the biological theory of adaptation? And why protest at all? Not long ago Nature was conceived of as the living garment of God. Are you sure that the reaction against that sublime sentiment will last much longer? There is no falser antithesis than the opposing of Nature to Spirit. It is essentially Manicheism, the root of all that is fanatical in morals and benighting in metaphysics, and the first error that must be overcome if we are to reconcile science with religion.

In a courageous chapter, Dr. Schiller has advocated psychical research as a hopeful method of verifying the doctrine of immortality; and in a chapter on "Faith, Reason and Religion," he has explained how far the Pragmatist method may be considered favorable to religious beliefs. All the efforts of mankind toward mutual understanding are most commendable; but philosophy can never be at one with popular thought, except by recreating it. On comparing the postulates of science and religion, is it not plain that, unless science is to be overthrown, some way entirely different from popular religion must be found for the redemption, or moral strengthening and consolation of mankind? And would it not well become those who have the power both of philosophy and

literature—of whom there are eminent examples amongst the Pragmatists—to devote themselves to discovering and preparing such a way of peace? Or perhaps, in order to reach the great world, it is necessary first to inspire those who, in quick and comprehensive sympathy, stand nearest to it. Philosophy must indeed, as Dr. Schiller says, “aim at man’s complete satisfaction;” but philosophy itself can never satisfy any but the philosopher; that is, human nature as modified by philosophizing; it is impossible that the same thing in the same form should satisfy those who have not philosophized. To spread philosophical ideas amongst mankind, is the task of literature, eloquence and poetry.

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THE MORAL IDEAL. A Historic Study. By Julia Wedgwood. New and revised edition. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1907. Pp. vii, 504.

This is an able and a delightful book. It is difficult to give a good summary of it in a short space, because its range is so wide and its peculiar merit lies not so much in any startling novelty of view, as in the many fresh and stimulating *aperçus* with which it is filled. Moreover the work, though anything but incoherent, is not, and does not pretend to be, closely systematic; it is a series of separate studies on important types of moral aspiration, found in civilizations so diverse as those of Egypt, India, Persia, Greece and Rome. Unity is given by the writer’s strong personality and her unflinching grasp on those principles she considers of permanent value. Among these stands chief the spirit of what she well defines as “Spiritual Democracy—the sense of an inde-feasible claim on human sympathy in every human being” (p. 459). “This,” she says, “is in any vital sense a thing of yesterday,” and it has been vitalized, she holds, in great part by the growth of the nation as distinct from the city. In this way: The nation’s own limits are so wide as to force its patriots into a more comprehensive view; it *collects* and does not *select* its citizens; “the love of the nation is the love of the neighbor” (p. 89), that is, I take it, the love of those to whom we are bound more by the ties of common humanity than by any special choice or individual preference. There is a great deal in this, and it gives a freshness to the distinction between modern states and the states of